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To: W. S. Ross

25 Oct 1962 - 6,10177

From: W. S. Ross

Wickes, Eun

Subject: Possible Removal of Missiles by Khrushchev

FAC 02137 620289 Bernbaum

1. At a moment when we are concerned with the difficulty of taking out the Soviet offensive capability deployed in Cuba, we may tend to overlook the possibility that Khrushchev may remove it himself. This memorandum is intended to flag some of the questions which could arise in this connection.
2. Whether Khrushchev counted on our not finding out in time or on not reacting vigorously to our discovery, he may feel that he took a risk commensurate with the magnitude of the stake, and that he must now cut his losses - such as Molotov and associates when they had barely failed to overthrow Khrushchev in 1957 and then voted for their own condemnation.
3. However, Khrushchev does have the possibility of turning defeat at least in part into advantage. Suppose, for example, that he should manage to cover up his traces in Cuba in the near future sufficiently to predict correctly that a UN inspection team invited by Castro will find itself unable to determine whether there had once been IRBM's on certain sites. Further, suppose he were to exploit a negative UN finding by asserting that only the self-control and self-abnegation of the Soviets had foiled the greatest war provocateur of all time. (Khrushchev's message to Bertrand Russell is pertinent at this point.) The very boldness of the Soviet action which made it so incredible to many among us will make its denial all the more credible to the world at large.
4. To the extent that this line of approach by Khrushchev may be a plausible part of an attempt to extricate himself from a dangerous situation,

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we should perhaps be thinking now of taking out some insurance against the charges to which we would be vulnerable - even though our policy objective of attaining removal of the missiles had been achieved.

5. One suggestion is that the durability and persuasiveness of our evidence (for the kind of audience we would have to convince) be closely examined in the context suggested here.

6. A second suggestion - partly contingent on the first - would be to consider the feasibility and desirability of a raid of some kind in the near future which would enable us to produce (hard) evidence in support of our allegations.

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